

Connect

MARCH | APRIL 2017



- 2** Director's Corner
- 4** Groups Advocate for Psychiatric Beds
- 5** Benefits Staff Celebrated
- 6** Celebrating Black History
- 7** Shining a Light on Sexual Assault
- 8** Retrospective: Images from the Past
- 10** DCHS Highlights
- 14** Hello Goodbye
- 16** News You Can Use

Meeting Residents' Demand for Behavioral Health Services

Staff prioritize client needs and manage wait lists

Each year millions of Americans face the reality of living with a mental health condition. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, one in five Americans will be affected by a mental health condition in their lifetime, and every American is affected or impacted through their friends and family.

During Mental Health Month in May, NAMI and other organizations will raise awareness of the importance of mental health as well as advocate for equal care—the kinds of efforts that are a priority year round for DCHS behavioral health programs.

Serving the young and old

DCHS offers behavioral health programs and services for families and individuals of all ages. These programs provide compassionate and effective services that support self-determination, recovery and resiliency for Alexandria residents affected by mental illness and substance use disorders.

[The Center for Children and Families](#) offers a range of mental health and

Continued on page 3





Director's Corner

DCHS Director Kate Garvey

Organizational Assessment Update

As I shared in the last Director's Corner, we are embarking on an organizational assessment across the Department. The decision to carry out the assessment was made due to key retirements as well as the organization reaching a point in its development where it is valuable to take stock of the structure, performance and progress toward meeting expectations related to the merger of the Department in 2011.

The stated purpose of the merger was to bring together the City's social safety net programs under one organization to facilitate better coordination of services, improve access to services and enhance the experiences and outcomes of persons served. The organization has changed and evolved since the merger due to many factors including budget reductions, new grant opportunities, staff losses, changing regulations, demographics, partners and the continued utilization of best practices and emerging approaches. Based on all of these developments, it is an opportune time to evaluate our current state.

We are carrying out the assessment with the support of the American Public Human

Services Association (APHSA), which has significant experience in organizational effectiveness practice, including its critical thinking and continuous improvement model delivered through more than 90 projects across 30 states. We will be working directly with the APHSA Executive Deputy Director, Phil Basso.

The assessment will help identify what we are doing well, what gaps we face and what opportunities we have to strengthen the organization and our impact on the community. It will be critical to hear from all the key partners and stakeholders to assure that we have a full picture of our current status. We have started the feedback process with all of you. We have completed 10 meetings with programs and will have a total of 36 meetings by the end of May.

During the meetings, we are gathering your feedback on:

- Key outcomes
- Outcome enablers
- Outcome barriers
- Current departmental connections/collaborations
- Desired departmental connections/collaborations
- Structural change recommendations
- Benefits from being in the

Department

- Program priorities
- Desired program/support resources
- Activities to be discontinued
- Savings/efficiencies/revenue maximization opportunities
- Possible new initiatives

Each meeting thus far has provided rich information, and common themes are already emerging. The openness and thoughtfulness of those who have participated in the meetings has been wonderful and demonstrates the value of speaking directly to each program. The information gathered will help us to focus on areas that need to be strengthened and strategies to help us to achieve our goals.

We will also be gathering feedback from clients, public and non-profit partners and the Boards and Commissions. We are requesting ideas from each of the programs on the best method to get feedback from clients so that we can ensure that we get adequate participation and engagement in the process. Feedback will also be gathered through surveys and cross-functional focus groups that will delve more deeply into possible recommendations.

It is hoped that when we complete all the elements of

the assessment we will have identified:

- Key information on the view of the Department from internal and external stakeholders
- Opportunities to strengthen the practice and the outcomes of the Department
- Service and support gaps and collaborative opportunities
- Recommendations on structure and staffing of DCHS
- Areas of efficiency and savings
- Recommendations for improved alignment and coordination of services

The goal is to complete much of the assessment in the early summer and use the results and recommendations to make decisions regarding possible structural and programmatic changes and the filling of vacant positions. Some of the recommendations will likely require more work and study and so would be implemented through the coming fiscal year. Please keep an eye out for additional opportunities to provide feedback and guidance as we move through this process. Your involvement will be critical to us finding the right pathways as we move forward. 🌱

MEETING RESIDENTS' DEMAND FOR SERVICES — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

substance abuse programs, while residents over the age of 18 receive a broad range of services through the [Center for Adult Services](#).

Getting Help

To access behavioral health services, residents or system and community partners call either the Youth Behavioral Health Central Intake (571.213.7963) or Adult Intake (703.746.3535), where staff assesses the need and eligibility.

Eligibility includes such factors as whether the individual is a City resident and the priority of the situation. Those seeking services who are not eligible or who would like services elsewhere are provided with referral information.

After the initial contact, eligible residents set up an appointment for a more in-depth interview with a licensed clinician to determine the best services and treatment.

Young residents with urgent needs are seen for intake within five working days and others within 10 working days, with high risk referrals prioritized. In addition, youth can access school-based licensed therapists independently of the intake process.

Managing Priorities and Waitlists

Increased demand for services and the complexity of services coupled with budget limitations has squeezed resources, but staff work to insure everyone in need is connected with services.

Prioritization of who will receive services or who may be placed on a waitlist if a program is full is based on well-

established ethics guidelines. Priority populations may also change at any time. For adults, for example, priority populations may include pregnant and postpartum women, those living with HIV/AIDS, those released from a psychiatric hospital or correctional facility and users of intravenous drugs. In the youth programs, priority is given to children at risk for harm to self or others and/or at risk for residential placement outside of their home.

Waitlists for adult mental health and substance abuse programs change frequently. Program managers with waitlists carefully monitor lists and ensure communication with those waiting. But even if adult residents are on a waitlist or aren't in a priority population, that doesn't mean they aren't receiving services.

"If your needs are such that you need to be seen quickly, we up the urgency, look for services and work to get the individual engaged as soon as possible," says Intake Team Supervisor Federico Gutierrez.

In addition, says Gutierrez, some individuals on waitlists with more critical degrees of need are assigned to him or another intake clinician, who can assist them with acute clinical issues, anxiety and distress, any case management needed with gap insurance, and link them to other resources in the community and services in DCHS—like open support groups.

"We work where the individual is at to serve them as best as possible," says Gutierrez.

If residents are on a waitlist for services through the [Youth and Family Team](#),

says Behavioral Health and Youth Development Division Chief Tricia Bassing, they are offered alternative referrals and monitored for risk weekly by a clinical caseworker, who also provides assistance with non-clinical needs. For school referrals, members of the school support team monitor students on the waitlist.

Bassing reports that between the months of February and June the Youth and Family Team generally maintains an average wait of 15-30 days.

For [Community Wraparound Team](#) services, staff makes sure that referrals, who come from

system partners who provide case management services, don't wait for services.

"Because of the level of risk involved in these referrals, the team does not maintain a waitlist and instead helps system partners and families identify alternative services," says Bassing.

There to Help

Life can throw unexpected turns—and when it does, DCHS is there to help. Behavioral health staff are committed to serving and improving the quality of life for all residents of Alexandria. 🌱

More about...

Behavioral Health Services

EXAMPLES OF CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILY PROGRAMS

- Community Wraparound Team: consultation, care coordination, assessment & treatment
- Family Partners Program
- Youth and Family Outpatient Team: consultation, case management, assessment, psychological testing & treatment
- School-based Treatment Services
- Juvenile Detention Center Mental Health & Substance Abuse Program
- Child Assessment & Treatment Center for Health
- Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence and LGBTQ Services

EXAMPLES OF ADULT PROGRAMS

- 24-Hour Emergency Mental Health Services
- Mental Health Outpatient Services
- Substance Abuse Outpatient Services
- Mental Health and Substance Abuse Support Groups
- Opioid Treatment Program
- 24-Hour Detox Services
- Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence and LGBTQ Services
- Mental Health and Substance Abuse Residential Services
- Comprehensive Recovery Team
- TRAILS (for young adults experiencing first psychosis)

For a full list of services or for more information about any of the services listed above, visit www.alexandriava.gov/DCHS

Groups Advocate for more Psychiatric Beds

Increased demand leads to shortage of beds in local hospitals

Community Services Board (CSB) employees of DCHS have long been familiar with Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center and their rapid response financial assistance

to behavioral health clients with needs that sometimes fall through the cracks of the community safety net.

But Friends does much more than help pay for medical care, utilities and youth camps. This year, Friends joined forces with the Arlington Mental Health Alliance to petition the Virginia Hospital Center's (VHC) application to purchase land for the addition of 100 medical/surgical beds. In order to approve this request, advocates want the Health Systems Agency of Northern Virginia to require VHS to open a minimum of 15 new psychiatric beds to help serve the acute needs of

people with Temporary Detention Orders (TDOs).

When an individual is evaluated and it is determined that involuntary psychiatric hospitalization is necessary, a Temporary Detention Order (TDO) is issued, and within eight hours, the CSB must call at least eight Virginia hospitals to locate a bed.

In the past, nearly 90% of Alexandrians in need of emergency psychiatric services went to Mount Vernon Hospital. Currently, 46% are admitted there as other CSB's in the region are also using those beds due to a dramatic statewide increase in TDOs.

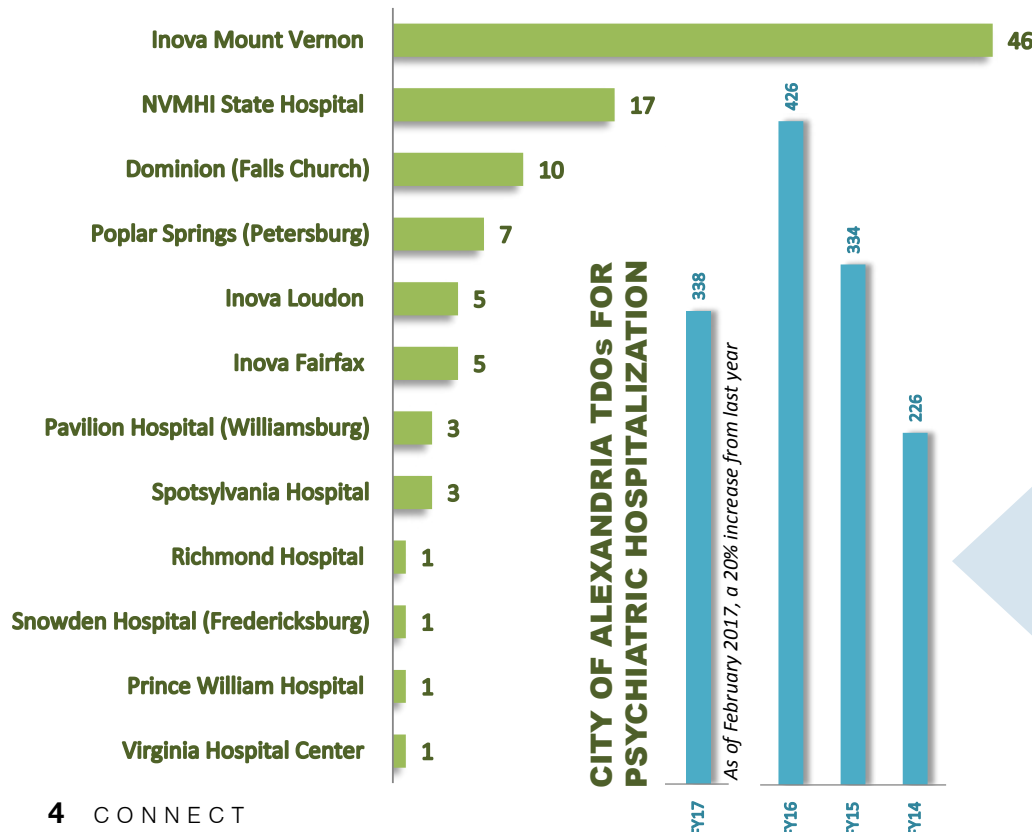
TDO referrals increased due to a combination of factors, including legislation following the Senator Deeds and Virginia Tech tragedies, jail diversion initiatives that refer people for treatment versus incarceration and greater awareness of mental health due to public education, which have led to a high increase in school referrals.

Due to the shortage of local inpatient beds, consumers are more and more frequently referred to Out of Region facilities. If a bed in a private hospital cannot be found, the person is sent to the state hospital- Northern Virginia Mental Health Institute. NVMHI, located in Fairfax, is becoming overwhelmed, so those in need of treatment may be sent even further away. One consumer was referred to Southwestern State Hospital in

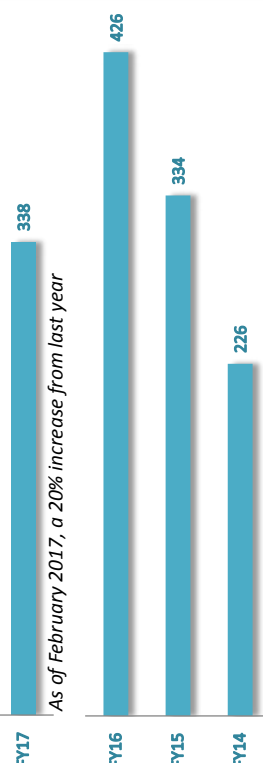


Photo Credit: NCHDC (Attribution-NoDerivs 2.0 Generic)

HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS OF ALEXANDRIA TDOs



CITY OF ALEXANDRIA TDOs FOR PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALIZATION



As of February 2017, a 20% increase from last year



Benefits staff celebrated

Acknowledging work by staff serving residents of Alexandria

On February 23, DCHS Benefits staff celebrated Benefit Program Specialist Day, an annual state event acknowledging the achievements, dedication and commitment of these employees to the residents of the Commonwealth and the City of Alexandria.

Benefit Program Specialists serve and inform individuals and families in need of food, energy, medical and other financial assistance. Their responsibilities include assessing eligibility, providing accurate and useful information to clients, and coordinating with community partners—such as court services, employment services, child services, housing services and DCHS programs—on behalf of clients.

Benefits employees also provide supportive services, including crisis intervention, counseling and problem-solving. They work with clients to develop individualized service plans to promote self-sufficiency and maximize their personal resources, collaborating with them to formulate service plans that address a wide-range of needs such as housing, family relationships, social activities, daycare, health care,

financial management, education, training and employment, substance abuse treatment and parenting education.

This year's event, which was circus-themed, was held at 2525 Mount Vernon and included lunch and prizes for the staff.

Staff and supervisors received t-shirts with the slogan "Don't Quit. Adapt to VaCMS." Benefits programs like SNAP, TANF, Medicaid and Energy Assistance moved to the VaCMS computer system from ADAPT, which had been in use for more than 20 years.



More about...

Center for Economic Support

The Center for Economic Support provides programs and services for Public Benefits, Community Services, and Employment and Training. The mission is to provide direct services to City of Alexandria residents in need of temporary assistance with food, shelter, employment and State medical assistance as they strive toward self-sufficiency.

Marion, 320 miles away.

The search for hospital beds ties up resources among CSB staff and law enforcement. What's more, placing people in hospitals far from home complicates treatment. Families face challenges in traveling long distances to be involved in the treatment and discharge planning for their loved one. Upon discharge, the home CSB

is required to follow-up with the patient for treatment planning. This is difficult when the person is out of the area.

While the VHC admits only one per cent of Alexandria TDOs, additional beds there would relieve the entire region.

Why have psychiatric beds declined and why are hospitals reluctant to add them? Critics claim it's because they are far

less lucrative than beds for cancer treatment or surgery.

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 requires nonprofit hospitals to assess the health needs of their communities and to implement a strategy to address those needs. The VHC Community Health Needs Assessment identified mental illness as the top service gap,

yet, when meeting with CSB representatives, they maintained that no more beds are needed. CSB data shows 208 TDOs were turned away from VHC in FY16.

Hearings began April 3 and a decision is forthcoming. Thank you to Friends and Emergency Services Team Leader Gabriel Deur for contributing to this article.

Celebrating Black History

Annual fundraising event boasts food, speakers and fun for a good cause

On February 28, DCHS staff celebrated Black History Month with a program and luncheon organized by the Gift from the Heart Black History Committee.

Black History Month is an annual celebration of achievements by black Americans

and a time for recognizing the role, contributions and accomplishments of African Americans in U.S. history. Each year, the committee organizes the luncheon to raise cultural awareness about the contributions by Black Americans and raise money for the Alexandria Scholarship Fund.

This year's luncheon program focused on the challenges of African Americans' access to education, from the days of slavery to present, as well as the aspirations and accomplishments of those who overcame those challenges.

Audrey Davis, an art historian and Director of the Alexandria Black History Museum, engaged staff with historical photographs and recounts of historical experiences of African Americans in Alexandria, including the Alexandria Library Sit In (which protested equal access to community resources) and the lives of contraband (escaped slave

families) in Union-occupied Alexandria during the Civil War. Davis, whose great-great grandfather was the Superintendent of Contraband, is also an on-set historical consultant for several PBS television series including *Mercy Street*, a drama that centers around an Alexandria hospital in the midst of the Civil War.

Staff also heard from Bill Cleveland, a past vice mayor and City Council member who spent decades of his career with the U.S. Capital Police Department. He moved the audience with passionate descriptions of the work of the Untouchables, a male youth program supported by DCHS Youth Development Counselors Theodore "Teddy" Jones and James "Chucky" Moore, who cofounded the program in 1988. Groups of school-aged black male youth still meet weekly in Alexandria with mentors who help them strive for excellence and make positive impacts. Cleveland, who has been an Untouchables mentor since its inception, delivered an emotional performance of the Untouchables rap, which had audience members on their feet applauding. He ended with a powerful delivery of the Untouchable's Creed.

The event, along with a breakfast fundraiser held earlier in the month, raised \$849.90 towards the committee's pledged amount of \$1500 for the Alexandria Scholarship Fund. The scholarship will be awarded to a senior at T.C. Williams on behalf of DCHS employees at the end of the 2017 school year. 🌱



More about...

BECOMING A MEMBER

The Gift from the Heart Black History Committee was established over 30 years ago by staff of the former Alexandria Department of Human Services. From its inception, the purpose has been to raise money for educational scholarships. The committee has raised money hosting events such as fashion shows, bake sales, raffles, auctions, hot dog sales and luncheons. Luncheon speakers have included local dignitaries such as former Alexandria Mayor William Euille and Deputy City Manager Deborah Collins.

The committee is always looking for new members. The only criteria is that you must be DCHS employee. If you are interested in joining the committee, please contact Chris.Washington@alexandriava.gov, Avis.Hunter@alexandriava.gov or Jackie.Bostick@alexandriava.gov.

Shining a Light on Sexual Assault

Raising awareness about violence against men, women and children through prevention efforts

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM), and the Alexandria Sexual Assault Center (SAC) is highlighting the month through various programs and activities to engage individuals, organizations and communities in prevention efforts through education, empowerment and unity.

SAAM began with national "Take Back the Night" marches protesting the violence women encountered on the streets at night. Activists then initiated a week devoted to sexual assault awareness, which eventually grew into a month.

Locally, SAC staff organized several events to raise awareness of prevention efforts and shine a light on the work of the center and its partners to support the City's women, men and children affected directly and indirectly by the issue of sexual assault.

SAC collaborates with City agencies to offer a multitude of services year-round to carry out its mission of cultivating a safe, secure and just community through advocacy, education and prevention. The program aims to foster a healthy and thriving community by promoting a social climate in which sexual assault is unacceptable and through providing culturally competent services to all who are affected by sexual violence.

Several events throughout April are helping to expand prevention efforts within the City as well as mobilize Alexandrians to take action.

SAC held its fourth an-

nual Poetry Slam, where participants shared words and stories related to violence against women and men. The center also organized the *Clothesline Project*, a visual display at City Hall of t-shirts made by survivors that bears witness to the violence they have experienced, and hosted its first *Resiliency Yoga*, giving survivors the opportunity to practice mindfulness in a controlled and supportive group atmosphere.

In addition, the *Messages of Hope Campaign*, a display of jeans decorated to empower survivors through the use of uplifting and supportive messages, was scheduled in five locations around the City, including the Police Department, Casey Clinic and the Department of Health, where the displays are still available until April 30.

In line with the *Messages of Hope Campaign*, SAC urges individuals to wear jeans on upcoming *Denim Day*, April 26,

in support of the message that there is never an invitation for rape, including one's clothing. The center is also hosting its fourth annual bowling tournament on April 28, and you can find staff and volunteers on hand at the Market Square and Del Ray farmers markets on April 29.

The goal of these activities and events is to foster unity amongst partners, survivors and the community, normalizing the critical expectation for everyone to do their part to mitigate the impact and eventually eradicate sexual assault. 🌱

~by Ashley Blowe



More about...

UPCOMING EVENTS

Messages of Hope Campaign Displays

Available until April 30

Police Department (3600 Wheeler Ave.)

Casey Clinic (1200 N. Howard St.)

Department of Health (4480 King Street)

Denim Day

April 26

Wear jeans to work, school or around town as a visible means of protest against myths that surround rape and sexual assault. For more information, go to denimdayusa.org

Strike Out Sexual Assault Bowling Tournament

April 28, 1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Bowl America/Shirley, 6450 Edsall Road

Open to MDT team and DCHS staff

Contact Ashley.Blowe@alexandriava.gov for more information

Community Awareness Tabling

April 29

Old Town Farmer's Market

Del Ray Farmer's Market





Retrospective

IMAGES FROM THE PAST

Upon Deputy Department Director Suzanne Chis's retirement this April, she passed on several binders and scrapbooks of materials collected from as early as the 1930s.

A glimpse into the letters, memos and newspaper articles shows how human services and social conditions have changed, or in some instances, perhaps have not changed enough.

The arrangement of images includes social workers and clients from as far back as 65 years ago.



Above are photos of staff from the 1960s and 1970s.

Above are undated photos of staff with clients as well as a client's family who was receiving services (bottom).

Welfare workers criticize bosses

By GORDON LUBOLD
Journal staff writer

Employees at Alexandria's department of Human Services say the management style there is dated and prevents them from doing the jobs for which they are hired.

A local professional union's proposal to City Manager Vol. 1 says and the department's director, Gary Cyphers, calling for a change in the Human Services Department. Union officials say the proposals came after more than a year of thinking about the issues, as the welfare reform efforts have made their concerns more relevant. Those officials say the relationship between management and workers has begun to fray.

"Management had taken on an adversarial role, one against the other," said John Henderson, an officer with Clerical and Technical Employees Local 2890. "I don't believe this is true. That's not the language I use and that's not the way I see my employees," Cyphers said. He said he takes seriously the contents of the 30-page proposal he received in April.

Representatives from both unions, Henderson's and the Alexandria Professional Workers Local 278, say their plan only reflects management ideas comparable to similar departments in other jurisdictions. He said the more than 200 employees he represents truly want to help make the department run better.

"The ideas that are in the proposal are not really radical," said Henderson, president of the Alexandria

A range of brochures and pamphlets from the 1960s and 1970s



A SNAPSHOT OF LOCAL HUMAN SERVICES



A collection of newspaper clippings from the late 1960s through the 1990s.

Below are two pages from the first log of social service clients in the City from the mid 1930s.

Particularly noteworthy, are pages from the very first log of social service clients in the City of Alexandria, dating from the mid-1930s. The majority of clients are "W" or white. The "C," denoting colored, changes to "N" farther in the log for Negro.

Looking over this collage, it's interesting to see the language used throughout, to glimpse newspaper headlines of the past as well as see the old publication styles, not to mention clothing and fashion styles.

TYPEWRITER DESIGNED BY KUEST / FREEPIK



DCHS Highlights



POINT IN TIME COUNT OF HOMELESS RELEASED

The 2017 Annual Point-in-Time (PIT) Count revealed 211 persons experiencing homelessness (i.e., unsheltered and in temporary shelter made available by homeless services providers) in the City of Alexandria:

- ▶ 30 Households with Adults and Children (35 Adults and 56 Children)
- ▶ 120 Singles (83 Men, 36 Women, and 1 Transgender), including:
- ▶ 18 Unsheltered Singles
- ▶ 43 Chronically Homeless Singles

The total number of persons identified as experiencing homelessness during the 2017 Count decreased by 6% from 2016, comprising a 7% decrease in single adults, a 7% increase in families, and a 13% decrease in children in households.

The annual enumeration, traditionally done on the last Wednesday of January, provides a one-night unduplicated “snapshot” of persons experiencing homelessness as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development. The Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness in the City of Alexandria, a public-private collaborative that serves as the local Continuum of Care, conducted the City’s 2017 PIT Count on Wednesday, January 25.

A team of DCHS staff led by the [Homeless Services/PATH Coordinator Dana](#)

[Woolfolk manually counted and surveyed persons who were unsheltered](#) (i.e., who slept outdoors or in places not meant for habitation). DCHS and non-profit homeless services staff provided Homeless Management Information System data and client-level surveys for persons assisted in residential homeless services programs on the night of the count.

PIT Count results help convey the scope of homelessness, identify and assess unmet needs and gaps in services, inform funding and other planning decisions, and evaluate progress made in preventing and ending homelessness. [Homelessness in Metropolitan Washington](#), the complete report of the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments’ regional PIT Count results, will be posted the afternoon of May 10.



LISSETTE TORRES RECEIVES SALUTE TO WOMEN AWARD

Saluting the tireless work and commitment to women and girls throughout the community was the focus at the Alexandria Commission for Women’s 37th Annual Salute to Women Awards celebration on March 20 at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office’s Madison Auditorium.

Ten women were honored for their valuable community contributions and their impact on the well-being of Alexandria’s women and girls.

One of the award-winners was DCHS’s

own Lisette Torres, who received the Vola Lawson Award. This award recognizes a City employee who, like Vola Lawson, advanced, improved or otherwise contributed to the status of women in the City of Alexandria during the course of his/ her job.

Torres serves as the Coordinator for the Alexandria Campaign on Adolescent Pregnancy, a community coalition that leads the City’s teen pregnancy prevention initiatives. She was selected as a 2016 Alexandria Chamber of Commerce’s ‘40 under 40’ award recipient and is a mentor with the Space of Her Own mentoring program.



DR. SEUSS AT RAMSEY

When ACPS celebrated “Dr. Seuss Read Across America” in March, Youth Development Counselor Norka Antelo was among those who dressed up as characters while parents and staff read to the students at William Ramsay Elementary School.

The day, organized by The National Education Association, was celebrated with a series of ongoing activities in schools throughout the week. Students, parents and staff participated in a variety of fun and educational activities to salute books and honor the birthday of beloved *The Cat in the Hat* author Dr. Seuss.

~by Noraine Buttar



CAC HAT'S OFF! GALA IS A HUGE SUCCESS

On February 24, the Center for Alexandria’s Children (CAC) *Hat’s Off! Gala* raised more than \$100,000 and welcomed 270 guests to the Old Town Hilton to continue the cause of eradicating child abuse in the City of Alexandria. Great fun was had in the process.

The annual gala raises funds to support the CAC in providing comprehensive help, protection and healing connection to children and families who have experienced child abuse.

DCHS Center for Children and Families Director Deborah Warren served as 2017 Gala Co-Chair along with Commonwealth Attorney Bryan Porter and CAC Board Member Kathy Martin.

(In the photo above, Warren poses with Deputy City Manager Debra Collins at the event.)

THANK YOU TO THE DCHS FACILITIES TEAM

Kudos to the Facilities team for their snow preparation and removal work last winter!

Preparing for events such as snow generally consists of making sure that the necessary equipment is in place and staff is available, explains Customer Call Center Manager Fernando Perez-Lee.

For example, all residential group

homes are equipped with snow shovels, blowers and salt so that the staff at the homes can, if necessary, have it available until Facilities can arrive. When appropriate, the team salts sidewalks and driveways ahead of time. All homes also are equipped with generators, which are checked quarterly to ensure that they are in working order. Fuel is provided when a storm is predicted.

“For a storm of short duration, we wait until the storm is over and begin snow removal as soon as possible afterwards,” says Perez-Lee. “This last storm, staff came in at 6 a.m. in order to clear snow as early in the day as possible.”

If a storm is predicted to be severe and/or last longer than a day, the team may be housed in a local hotel so that they are more readily available to address snow removal and other issues related to storm effects. For all weather events, it is a matter of making sure that the necessary equipment and supplies are in place, keeping an eye on the changing forecast and maintaining flexibility to adjust to changing needs.

“With every winter snow event, you all consistently show up and show out, providing much needed, exceptional service,” wrote Allyson Coleman in an email to the team. “And the excellent planning and execution of the plan is an integral part of



Program

WELCOME

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

- PATRICIA PAXTON | Leadership in Business and Career Development Award
presented by Councilmember Redella S. Del Pepper
- YOLANDA CARRASCO & MILDRED RIVERA | Making a Difference Award
presented by Councilmember Redella S. Del Pepper
- KENDALLEE WALKER | Youth Community Service Award (Youth)
presented by Mayor Allison Silberberg
- LAVON CURTIS | Youth Community Service Award (Adult)
presented by Mayor Allison Silberberg
- MARTHA CARUCCI | Women’s Health and Safety Advocate Award
presented by Former State Senator Patsy Ticer
- LAURIE MACNAMARA | The Marguerite Payez Leadership Award
presented by Former State Delegate Marian Van Landingham
- LISA SMITH | The Donna Berghem Cultural Affairs Award
presented by Ms. Maria Berghem
- LISSETTE TORRES | The Vola Lawson Award
presented by Mr. McArthur Myers
- DORATHEA PETERS | The Susan Lowell Butler Lifetime Achievement Award
presented by Delegate Charmiele Herring

CLOSING REMARKS

DESSERT RECEPTION

this successful outcome.”

“The guys worked really hard while many of us were able to take advantage of the delayed opening or leave,” adds Chris Washington. “Too often they don’t get recognition for what they do, but often what they do allows us to do what we do.”



VOLUNTEERS HONORED AT CITY HALL

Departments city-wide along with City Council and city managers honored 150 volunteers for their work at a ceremony in Market Square.

Since last summer, 2,000 people have volunteered in Alexandria, providing more than 34,000 hours of service valued at nearly \$1 million. Photos are available in the DCHS Information folder under Department Wide Photos/2017/Volunteer Ceremony. View a video from the ceremony at www.facebook.com/AlexandriaVA-Gov/videos/10155354628130757/.



DCHS TEAM COMPETING FOR CITY CUP

After a first place finish in the fall season Kickball competition and a fourth place finish in the winter season basket-

ball competition, DCHS is tied for second place in the overall City Cup standings.

Recreation defeated the DCHS team to take third place in the Winter City Cup Basketball League. City Hall took first and Police came in second.

With the basketball season over, the spring softball league starts on May 4. DCHS is still looking for women and men to join the softball team. Contact Jeff.Bollen@alexandriava.gov to sign up.



YOUTH DEVELOPMENT WORKERS RECOGNIZED

Youth Development Counselors Theodore “Teddy” Jones and James “Chucky” Moore received the Ally in Prevention Award at the 15th Annual Allies in Prevention Awards luncheon hosted at Maggianos on April 6.

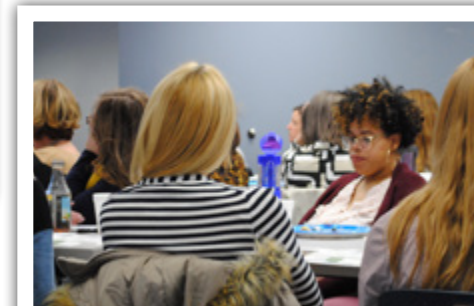
The Allies in Prevention Coalition, an initiative of SCAN of Northern Virginia, engages child and family welfare advocates in communicating regional messages to prevent child abuse and promote children’s well-being in Northern Virginia.

The awards honored six remarkable men and women working to protect children, support families and prevent child abuse and neglect across Northern Virginia. Teddy Jones and Chucky Moore were recognized for making it their lives’ work to improve positive youth outcomes by providing youth with education, positive role models and unconditional support.

Jones and Moore have worked for the City for more than 35 years, founding and supporting several youth programs, such as the Peer Advisor program where youth

are trained in leadership, communication, and how to teach their peers and children anger management, violence prevention and peer pressure refusal skills. They also founded the Untouchables, a male mentoring program that focuses on building the physical, education and spiritual capacities of young males.

Both are passionate advocates for youth. The fact that generations of the same families have passed through their programs and seen positive life outcomes, gives testament to the work they did, and continue to do, to improve the lives of youth in the City of Alexandria. ~by Noraine Buttar



CWS STAFF LEARN ABOUT GRIEF AND LOSS

On March 22, child welfare staff marked National Social Work Month with a breakfast and morning training centered around loss and grief among foster and adopted children.

Grief is a difficult emotion to process as an adult, and especially for a child. Coupling that emotion with the lack of basic necessities like shelter, security and family makes coping unimaginable. Child welfare staff learned about the unique losses experienced by children in foster care and adoption and about the critical factors that influence children’s reaction to loss. The training also provided insight to the loss experienced by the biological parents and extended family when the children are removed and the foster families when children are returned home.

~by Peggy Stypula



INCLUSIVE SERVICES FOR THE TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY

Transgender people experience extremely high rates of discrimination and violence. On March 30, nearly 150 service providers gathered at the Lee Center to address this reality at “Building Inclusive Services: Working with the Transgender Community.”

Rebecca Kling from the National Center for Transgender Equality kicked off the morning with inspiring words. She lifted up her own story as a transgender woman and the stories of other transgender people as a call to service providers to strive towards providing inclusive spaces for transgender people.

Participants then split into one of four training tracks—youth, healthcare/medical, law enforcement and universal service provision—where they learned from an expert about issues impacting transgender people.

A panel of four local transgender people closed the training by sharing their journeys as trans people and how service providers helped or could have helped along the way. One of the panelists said that seeing this many service providers coming out to learn about trans issues warmed her heart and gave her hope.

For more information and upcoming Alexandria LGBTQ Task Force events, please contact Erika Callaway Kleiner at erikaock@gmail.com. ~by Erika Callaway Kleiner

DCHS Star Awards

FEBRUARY 2017

SUPER STAR NOMINEES

None

STAR AWARD NOMINEES

Julio Basurto

MARCH 2017

SUPER STAR NOMINEES

None

STAR AWARD NOMINEES

Genevieve Fields

Star Award Nomination Form:

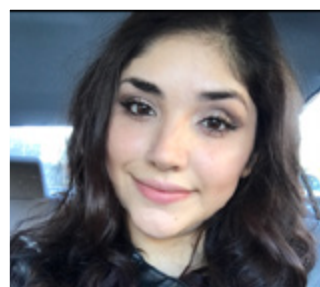
survey.alexandriava.gov/s3/DCHS-Star-Award-Nomination-Form

Super Star Nomination Form:

survey.alexandriava.gov/s3/DCHS-Superstar-Award-Nomination-Form

Hello & Goodbye

NEW STAFF



STEPHANIE ARGUETA

Stephanie Argueta joined DCHS as a part-time Intake Case Worker with the Community Wraparound Team.

Previously, she worked at a middle school in Silver Spring with recently migrated families. She moved to Virginia two years ago from Massachusetts for job advancement. She is grateful for this opportunity and looks forward to helping families in the Alexandria community.



TAMERA BROWN

After working as an administrative support temp with DCHS for a year, Tamera Brown

joined the Center for Economic Support as a Client Intake Services Worker. She is currently enrolled in school for business management and enjoys reading and taking long walks. She is more than excited to be a part of the DCHS team and looks forward to working with everyone and accomplishing great things over the years.



BERHANU DINSSA

Berhanu Dinssa joined the Workforce Development Center VIEW/SNAPET team as Business Services Specialist/Employment and Training. He comes to the team with extensive experience in the field of employment and training services. Most recently, he has worked for Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services as program Manager for Stabilization, and with Migration and Refugee Services of Catholic Charities in direct service provision as well as managing employment services for refugees, asylees, and other immigrant groups. Dinssa is known

for his passion and dedication in advocating for and supporting individuals in their journey towards economic self-sufficiency. He enjoys participating in his church activities. Outside of work, he supports the community through a website and blog he has created for sharing employment related information. He also volunteers in public libraries focusing on employment services. Dinssa holds two graduate degrees and speaks English, Amharic, Oromo and Russian languages. While he currently resides in Maryland, he is relocating to Alexandria in May.

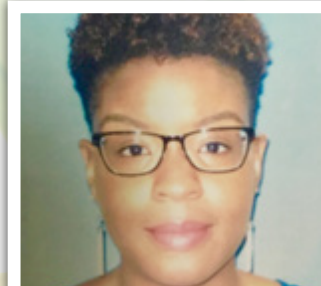
VALERIA DRAGONE

Valerie Dragone joined the Finance Team as the new Reimbursement Manager. She comes to DCHS from Arlington County, where she served as Reimbursement Manager for the last six years, supervising a team that handled medical billing for the Community Services Board as well as the Department of Health. She has 10 years of experience with large corporations in the medical and technological fields. She was instrumental in setting up the PACT and DD Waiver billing modalities here in Alexandria. She brings a strong sense of devotion and passion for helping others and

is eager to share her extensive knowledge and experience here in Alexandria.

ANDREY FADEYEV

Andrey Fadeyev joined DCHS as a Therapist Supervisor with Detox Services. Fadeyev has seven years of experience working in direct practice and leadership roles in the outpatient, forensic and community based settings, serving diverse population with co-occurring disorders ages 15-75. In the last five years, Fadeyev worked in various leadership roles in an outpatient mental health clinic--Green Door Behavioral Health. Fadeyev believes prosperity and growth will blossom in any organization when employees are selected based on a match between core values of the employee, which are aligned with the mission of the organization, credentials and attitude to serve; at the same time an organization will commit to safeguarding employees through collaborative leadership, flexibility, respect, competitive pay, benefits and opportunity for growth. "The City of Alexandria matches the last statement precisely," says Fadeyev, "which is why I'm so grateful to be here."



MESHA HALL

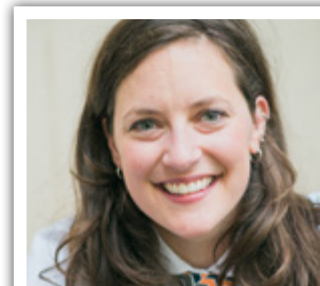
Mesha Hall joined the Office for Economic Support as a Family Services Specialist II. She earned her Bachelor in Social Work from Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, and an MSW from the University of Connecticut. She previously worked in homeless prevention services in Fairfax County. Relatively new to the DMV, Hall enjoys exploring the various activities and attractions the region has to offer—her favorite activity so far has been kayaking on the Potomac. She is excited for the opportunity to work with DCHS to serve families in the City of Alexandria.

JENNIFER KELLER

Jennifer Keller recently joined DCHS as a Benefit Programs Supervisor. She has a Master's in Human Services from Liberty University. She came from the State of Oklahoma Department of Human Services benefits unit and previously worked in eligibility for



Warren County Department of Social Services in Front Royal, Virginia. Keller currently resides in Haymarket with her family. She enjoys worshipping at her local church, watching her children play sports and traveling. A Virginia native, she is thankful to be home with family and friends and excited to be a part of the Eligibility Team.



MAGGIE LIVELSBERGER

Maggie Livelsberger joined DCHS as the new SNAP/EBT Program Coordinator for the Farmers' Market in Old Town. She will be doing nutrition based education and programming in the region, as well as managing the SNAP office at the Saturday mar-

ket. She hails from the Philadelphia area, and enjoys traveling, camping, backpacking and everything outdoors. She is excited to be a part of the team and to explore more of what Alexandria and D.C have to offer.

LILY SUTHERLAND

Lily Sutherland joined DCHS as a senior therapist in the Community Wraparound Team under Youth Behavioral Health.

JOB CHANGE

Kwasi Anwomkea, who recently graduated with a masters in nursing and is currently licensed as an adult/geriatric nurse practitioner is the Nurse Practitioner Supervisor for the Opioid Treatment Program. **Claudia Atteberry** is a Senior Benefit Programs Specialist for Benefit Programs in the Center for Economic Support. **Jacqui Bostick** is a Fiscal Officer I with Finance. Annie Diaz is a Senior Human Resources Analyst with the Human Resources team. **Andy Hamdie** is now a full-time Account Clerk III with Finance. **Bridget Oriaku** is a full-time registered nurse with Detox Services. **Therese Photiadis** is the

Psychiatric Administrator with the Psychiatric Services Unit. **Michelle Stevens** is a Licensed Practical Nurse with Detox Services. **Ronald Stewart** is a part-time residential counselor at Windsor.

RETIREMENT



Suzanne Chis (above) retired after 34 years with the City and 45 years in public human services. Suzanne has served as the Director of Social Services from 1983 to the present. Following the merger of human services with behavioral health and women's services, Suzanne became the Deputy Director of DCHS, and later, also became the Executive Director of the Alexandria Community Services Board.

Debra Nygaard retired after serving 28 years as a clinical psychologist on the Youth and Family Team. 🌱



News You Can Use

GET YOUR FFAC RAFFLE TICKET!

The Fund for Alexandria's Child will celebrate its Annual Fostering the Future Gala on Friday, June 9, at the Sheraton Suites Alexandria. The event will feature entertainment, hors d'oeuvres, open bar, dancing, a silent and live auction and more.

This year's theme is Superhero Soiree. "We'll be celebrating our heroes," says the Fund's Coordinator Krystal Fenwick, "the kids in our programs and our generous supporters!"

The annual spring gala serves as the Fund's major fundraiser to support its mis-

sion of helping foster children and those at-risk of abuse and neglect to share the formative life experiences most children today take for granted.

"We go beyond what the foster care system can provide," says Fenwick, "to ensure that children in crisis can enjoy the enriching opportunities in life, such as music lessons, sports, field trips, birthday gifts, yearbooks, summer camp, outings with family and the like."

Tickets are on sale now to attend the event.

Unable to attend? You can still show support by purchasing a raffle ticket for a chance to win a St. Croix, Virgin Islands Carambola Resort Vacation stay for up to four people and a \$500 travel voucher.

Raffle Tickets are \$20 each and only 500 will be sold. Visit www.biddingforgood.com/fosteringthefuture or contact Krystal.Fenwick@alexandriava.gov for more information.

EVALUATIONS ARE UP TO DATE

Thanks to your dedicated efforts, the Department is now in full compliance with the execution of personnel evaluations.

"This is a huge success, so pat yourselves on the back," wrote Sharon Vaughn-Roach, Director for the Center for Operations, in an email to staff. "I really appreciate your commitment to this endeavor and now we are in a position to sustain this level of expectation, that we continue to reward our staff with timely feedback."

COVERAGE PLAN

Deputy Director Suzanne Chis wore many hats. Now that she has retired, find out who has her signature authorities, who sits on what boards and who attends what meetings for the interim by accessing the "Suzanne Chis Coverage Plan document in the DCHS Information Folder.

EMPLOYEE STORIES NEEDED FOR ALEXWORKS

Have a unique hobby? Are you passionate about your field of work? A proud graduate of T.C. Williams High School? Have a story you'd like to share? The Office of Communications & Public Information is looking for employees to highlight in the new #AlexWorks video series. #AlexWorks spotlights members of Alexandria's diverse local government workforce, giving you a voice to share your stories.

To participate, please fill out this [short survey](#). For questions, contact Paul King at paul.king@alexandriava.gov or 703.746.3964. To view a previous #AlexWorks video, visit www.alexandriava.gov/AlexWorks.



Connect seeks to inform DCHS employees about programs, services and changes within the Department. It also introduces you to one another on a more personal level, recognizes employee and team accomplishments, and helps foster relationships between programs and employees across DCHS. It features program activities and special events and helps keep you informed on departmental initiatives. We are always looking for news and ideas for stories. If you have an idea for a story or content, contact Carmen Andres at carmen.andres@alexandriava.gov or call 5753.